

5 Reason you should take “*Preparing Your ECS for NEPA Approval*”

The new class “***Preparing your ECS for NEPA Approval***” differs from the old class (Environmental Overview for Local Agencies) in the following ways:

1. The class is intended to give students the tools to prepare their own Environmental Classification Summary (ECS). The ECS was always intended for local programs to have an application/checklist they could fill out on their own. As time passed, it has become common to contract with a private party to complete the ECS.
2. This class will focus on NEPA through the eyes of a Documented Categorically Excluded (DCE). The old class spent too much time on Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) and Environmental Assessments (EA). These two categories are important although no locals perform these assessments without a small army of help. EIS and EAs are prepared most often by experts ranging from consultants to Highways & Local Programs (H&LP) staff. The new class will explain what an EIS or EA are but will not go into the actual processing.
3. You should attend to get the new book - we have completely rewritten the text book. This book is built to follow the ECS from beginning to end. No box or question asked by the ECS is left out of the book. The old book was loaded with information although the book was hard to transpose into what the ECS needed. The new book is written in the WSDOT Reader Friendly format which is ideal for the average person filling out the ECS.
4. The new format will allow us to be more interactive and have time to answer direct and specific questions. We will be able to talk about site specific issues as we cover each discipline within the NEPA application. The old format limited our time, many times we would limit questions on specific projects or issues.
5. To get updates NEPA is always making, 12 months is a long time in the NEPA world. NEPA policies and regulations are always in flux. This course gives us a chance to explain the most current policies and regulations. This part of the class is often the most popular because the NEPA process does not provide many outlets for NEPA updates. We also take advantage of updates to provide tips that can save local agencies time and money. This class is one of the main bulletin boards held annually in regard to NEPA.